

Appl. No.: 10/540,812
Reply to Office Action of: 12/05/2006

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REMARKS

The specification was objected to in view of improper language and format used in the abstract. Applicant has amended the abstract above to address the examiner's concerns.

Claims 1, 3, and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kunishi et al. (US 5,306,168). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunishi (US 5,306,168) in view of Yokoyama et al. (US 6,347,950). The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). It is submitted that Kunishi fails to teach each and every element as set forth in claim 1 for at least the reasons described below.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite, *inter alia*, "wherein the fixing portion and the protruding portion are separate from each other ... and said contact portions having second stoppers that come into contact with the fixing portion when the fixing portion is moved in a direction away from the opposing connector thereby stopping said protruding portion when the connector is removed from the opposing connector". In contrast, Kunishi merely discloses a floating type electrical connector having a housing 4 comprising an inner movable housing portion 9 connected to an outer stationary housing portion 10 by resilient joint pieces 11, and a

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plurality of female terminals 5 disposed within the housing 4. "The movable and stationary housing portions 9 and 10 and the joint piece 11 are molded as one piece" (see col. 5, lines 34-35 and Fig. 9) such that opposite ends of the resilient joint pieces 11 are integrally connected to the movable housing portion 9 and the stationary housing portion 10 (see col. 3, lines 45-48, and Figs. 7 and 10). Thus Kunishi fails to teach "wherein the fixing portion and the protruding portion are separate from each other" as claimed in amended claim 1.

Additionally, Kunishi discloses that the female terminals 5 comprise a lower contact section 22 having sawtooth projections 23, a base section 19 having laterally extending arms 31, 32, projections 24 extending from the laterally extending arms 31, 32, and an intermediate resilient section 20 connecting the lower contact section 22 and the base section 19. The sawtooth projections 23 are "held in the movable housing portion 9" (see col. 3, lines 65-66 and Fig. 6) as opposed to applicant's claimed invention having "second stoppers that come into contact with the fixing portion".

The projections 24 which extend from the laterally extending arms 31, 32 "skive into the stationary housing portion 10 at holes 35" (see col. 4, lines 1-2 and Fig. 6). There is no teaching in Kunishi that the laterally extending arms 31, 32 (or any other disclosed features) come into contact with the stationary housing portion 10 thereby stopping the movable portion of the housing 4 when the connector is removed from the opposing connector. Therefore, since the projections 24 are embedded and locked to the stationary housing portion 10, the laterally extending arms 31, 32 cannot "come into contact

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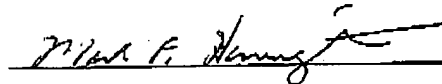
with the fixing portion when the fixing portion is moved in a direction away from the opposing connector thereby stopping said protruding portion when the connector is removed from the opposing connector". In Kunishi, the inner movable housing portion 9 (of the housing 4) is not stopped (when removed from the opposing connector) by any other stoppers or portions. Instead, the Kunishi connector utilizes the integrally formed configuration of the inner movable housing portion 9 and the outer stationary housing portion 10 to retain, or 'stop', the movable portion of the housing 4 when it is removed from the opposing connector. It is the resilient joint pieces 11, connecting the stationary and movable portions of the housing 4, or the resiliency of the intermediate section 20, that provide for retaining the movable housing portion of the housing 4 to the outer stationary housing portion 10. Thus, Kunishi fails to teach "contact portions having second stoppers that come into contact with the fixing portion when the fixing portion is moved in a direction away from the opposing connector thereby stopping said protruding portion when the connector is removed from the opposing connector", as claimed in amended claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over the art of record and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 3-5 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

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For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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2/15/07

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